

From: [Grant Robitzsch](#)
To: [PSC Contact](#); [Boyd, Jocelyn](#); [Dukes, Jerisha](#); [Easterling, Deborah](#)
Subject: [External] Protest to Palmetto Utilities rate increase
Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 10:01:14 PM

Public Service Commission,

I strongly disagree with another rate increase for Palmetto Utilities. In March 2018, our Palmetto Utilities wastewater bill was \$36.50 and our City of Columbia water bill was \$30.19. In May 2018, our Palmetto Utilities bill increased nearly 43% to \$52.10 and our City of Columbia bill was \$47.07. The amount of the City of Columbia water bill fluctuates based on our usage, e.g. summer months watering the lawn and garden, or visits from family. The highest City of Columbia water bill we had was \$105.17 in September 2019. The average City of Columbia water bill over the last two years is \$51.19. So, on average we are paying more for outgoing wastewater than for clean, incoming water from the City of Columbia. We are paying more for a smaller volume ending up as wastewater than for a larger volume of potable water. Yet, Palmetto Utilities is seeking another increase. This time a nearly 28% increase to \$66.62. Absurd! The rate increase is for improved infrastructure and large capital projects based on population growth, then the investment should be recouped when the population growth is realized. This planning on Palmetto Utilities part does not warrant a financial hardship for its customers. Additionally, a flat rate is unfair to households with less people. A one person retiree household on a fixed income will pay the same rate as a two income family of four. Wastewater rates should be based on water consumed or for a more accurate measure, water exiting the residence.

On or about February 11, public hearings were scheduled for March 12 and 19 at Spring Valley High School. Please reference the "Notice of Public Night Hearing" ID number 290308 under docket number 2019-281-S.

<https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Attachments/Matter/7715f5c1-b7c7-4a08-9f6b-44e439691907>

On March 11, a notice to postpone the March 12 hearing to March 19 was filed. Reference ID number 290880 under the above docket

number. <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Attachments/Matter/94b6e9fc-7bbb-4a9a-8744-112550257aec>

Not only was the March 12 hearing postponed to a date originally scheduled for the second hearing, but it was a virtual hearing. Basically, the two in-person hearings are becoming one virtual, call-in session. I am not discounting the crisis we are going through with Covid-19; however, to not allow the public due diligence of presenting themselves before the Commission is an insult. I understand a virtual hearing is scheduled for June 22. I truly hope this will not be the only time to allow the public to voice concerns. An in-person hearing is needed in order for the Commission to fully understand the impact on the public because a virtual hearing disregards the emotion of this matter on the public. A virtual hearing removes the human aspect and does not allow the Commission to gauge the impact of the rate increase by seeing their fellow citizen's emotions.

In closing, I ask you to delay further actions until our focus is not on Covid-19, schedule two in-person hearings, deny the 28% increase approving no more than the standard inflation rate, and change from a fixed rate to one based on consumption. Please file this as a letter of protest/comments and list me as a protestant.

Sincerely,

Grant Robitzsch

[REDACTED]

Columbia, SC 29229

[REDACTED]